

Jack Brooking (Jack Beach)
1212 Cathleen Circle
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561
Phone: 904/932-6359

REST STOP IX

Billy Joe Johnson & Dale at the Gautier Burger King
Saturday, January 27, 1996 4:00 p.m.

I was lucky to catch Billy Joe at home again. He was out in the yard with his head stuck under the hood of his truck. He climbed into my front seat, thanked me for the Christmas card and poem, and then suddenly said, "I've got that National Inquirer inside with Archie Ferrell's picture I told you about. Where he's dressed in a kind of dress and firing a pistol?" [Later he said he would have to check on the date of the publication, but that it was shortly after the Assassination.] I almost fell off the seat. "I'm not sure I can put my hands on it right now," he continued. But I didn't let him get any further. "Billy Joe," I said, "you get your ass in that trailer and get that paper. You never told me you owned a copy!"

"Well, I do. Couple more photos of me, too. Just don't know if I can find them right now." I almost booted him out of the car, and noticed how offhand we had become with one another.

He was gone about ten minutes. Meanwhile, cantankerous lover Dale came over from across the street and leaned on the window. "Just remember Dale Evans and you'll always remember my name," he'd told me a couple of visits back. And I do. I feel sorry for Dale. Over the holidays, he'd taken a

thirty-hour bus trip back to his home in New Jersey, because his sister had phoned him about his mother's serious heart attack. Poor guy got there too late. He clearly blamed himself for not being at her side. I tried to assure him he'd not been neglectful or done anything wrong. He said they no longer had the phone, because they'd kicked the couple out.

Billy emerged empty-handed. He explained it was probably under a stack of old browning and fragile papers, which he didn't want to risk moving just then. He promised to send me a Xerox of both it and the photos. When we decided to drive into town to the Burger King, he invited Dale to come along, which he did. It was OK with me. I had brought along the Gary Shaw's Cover-Up again to recheck his identification of the "first hobo" as Doyle.

"You know," he began in the car on the way over to the restaurant, "Doyle was a close buddy of deGranino (Gramino? He didn't have any idea of how to spell it). Granino was a mobster who was shot in Chicago. They used to hang out together at the Golden Lantern in N.O. Archie Bland (who, Billy said, out of the blue, had a son living in Puerto Rico) had this friend named Jack Slade [?] Anyhow, Jack was the one who flew the plane to [from?] Dallas. Jack was also a close buddy of Archie Ferrell and Doyle. "Doyle and Jack," Billy explained, "still work offshore and pal around together when they are back on land. They hang out at The Golden Lantern in N.O., The Golden Rod in Mobile, and a gay bar in Biloxi.

At the Burger King, I treated to sandwiches and fries, but only had coffee, myself, afraid of drowsiness on the road (which I had to fight in the best of conditions). Billy Joe's comments today had a gunshot-scatter quality about them. I told him I wanted more information about Doyle (whose last name

he thought was "Long"). He said Jack Slade lives in Alabama. They were all friends of Archie Bland. "Archie Bland, Jack, and Clay Shaw all went to school together."

Settled into our restaurant booth, I told him I'd been thinking a lot about Doyle. When I opened Cover-Up to the shots of the three "tramps," he reidentified as Doyle all the pictures of the first tramp, "Frenchy," and the police sketch from Memphis of the King Assassination suspect. He described Doyle as big with light hair and blue eyes. "For some reason," Billy said, "he sometimes used a German accent." Doyle had stayed at Billy's trailer about four years ago for two nights on his way to New Orleans. He made much over the fact that Doyle had given him two very expensive rings from Cartiers -- made a big point about it. He said he was sure they were stolen, explaining that Doyle was involved in robberies among lots of other stuff. Several times he repeated, "Doyle can live all kinds of ways; adjust to any situation" -- often hitchhiked, bummed around, stayed at YMCA's and Rescue Missions.

Billy Joe said he had met Doyle through Archie Bland in '64 [?]. Didn't like him. Afraid of him. Said he had a real amoral criminal mind: into dope peddling, robbery, "for hire" killings . . . safe crackings. He is now in his 50's [same age range as Billy].

He said that Jack Slade and Doyle were buddies, not lovers. Jack's rich lover was Chris (30's), who owned the Canal Baths on Gravier. He was into "golden showers," etc.

At this point the information becomes so scattered, that it is probably